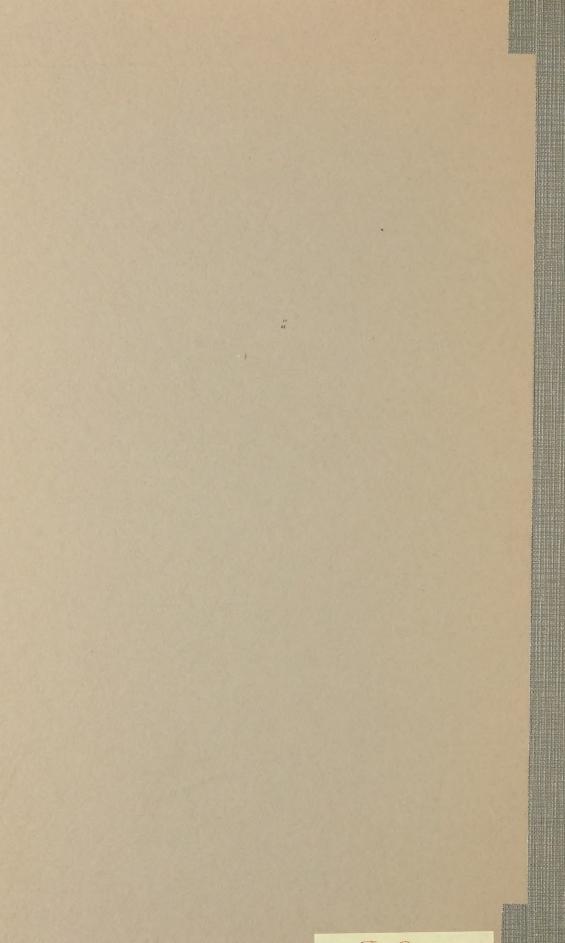


M 1533 E38 op. 33 1897



Short for

NOVELLO'S ORIGINAL OCTAVO EDITION.

THE

BANNER OF SAINT GEORGE

A BALLAD

FOR CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA

THE WORDS WRITTEN BY

SHA CO WENSLEY

E MU COMPOSED BY

EDV Al DELGAR.

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M 1533 E38 Dp.33

The instrumentation of this work has been so arranged by the composer that a small orchestra (String Quintet, I Flute, I Oboe, I Clarinet, I Bassoon, 2 Horns, 2 Cornets, I Trombone, and Drums) will be effective.

These instruments may be supplemented by any or all of the other instruments indicated in the Full Score.

THE BANNER OF ST. GEORGE.

SCENE I.

WITHIN Sylenë's walls no sound is heard,
Save the sad wail of anguish and despair.
From his dank lair the awful dragon comes,
His breath a pestilence, his glance a sword;
His scales of brass an armèd host defy;
Each day a maid from home and love is torn,
A pure white sacrifice, to stay his rage;
The women of Sylenë rend their hair
Disconsolate, and mourn their daughters slain.

"No more they charm the passing hours,
The comely daughters of our pride;
No more they twine the laughing flowers,
Or sing their songs at eventide.
The voice of love no longer cheers—
We listen for its tones in vain;
All mirth, alas! is changed to tears,
And we must weep our dear ones slain."

Forth from the palace, beautiful as day,
Fair Sabra comes, the daughter of the king;
Night in her eyes, and sunshine in her hair;
She turns her gentle face upon the throng,
And all grows hushed around her, grief itself
Dies sobbing into silence; for she seems
A pale, sweet vision from a purer world;
And tearful faces are upturned in love.
"Fear not," she cries, "the darkest hour of
night

Is oft the harbinger of silver dawn."

The agèd monarch, worn and grey,
Beside the lovely princess stands,
No more he sees in fair array
The muster of his warrior bands.
Alas! his bravest knights are slain,
Right well they strove, but strove in vain;
Now only words of anguish flow,
The cry, "O woe, Sylenë, woe!
Our daughters are devoured! the dragon waits
A maiden sacrifice! or e'er the night
We all in hideous death shall be o'erwhelmed!
All hope is gone! O woe, Sylenë, woe!"

Like charmed music o'er the 'frighted throng Falls Sabra's voice, pure as an angel's song, Clear as the throbbing of a silver bell, It lulls the tumult by its magic spell. "O calm your hearts," [she cries,] "O still your fears,

And let Hope shine amid the rain of tears;
The foe demands a sacrifice, this day
Your princess, Sabra, will the tribute pay.
A maiden of Sylenë proud am I,
For those I love 'twill not be pain to die;
Belovèd sire, O weep thou not for me,
I give my life to set Sylenë free.''

O beauteous Love! thou flower of heaven,
Transplanted to a world of care;
O spring thou up in dreary hearts,
With grace divine and beauty rare.
Then shall the desert places bloom,
As glorious as the bowers above,
And earth like Eden's garden smile,
O flower of heaven! O beauteous Love!

SCENE II.

Without a fear beside the dragon's tarn
The princess waits to die! A form of light.—
Her robes are spotless as the virgin snow,
And snow-white lilies deck her sunny hair.
With sad, sweet smile of innocence and love,
She listens to her father's last lament.
"Belovèd sire," she whispers, "dry thine eyes,
For ofttimes blessing wears a dark disguise;
And say of me henceforth with love and pride,
To give Sylenë peace she lived and died."

Hark! 'tis the ringing hoof of steed,
A warrior comes at foaming speed,
The sunbeams glint with flashing light,
On shining mail and helmet bright.
See! see! his coal-black steed draws night,
The shivered stones in sparkles fly!
Whence comest thou, majestic knight,
With spur of fire and sword of might?
With cross of red, and dauntless brow,
Majestic knight, whence comest thou?

Saint George no answer makes, but gives command:

"Unbind the maiden!" but the princess cries,

"Nay, I am here a willing sacrifice

To save Sylenë. Stand thou back, brave knight! The awful dragon stirs beneath the flood! "The knight of Cappadocia dauntless stands.

"Though all the powers of darkness shall assail,

At heaven's command, I fall,—or I prevail!
My good sword Ascalon is keen and bright,
No tarnish of unworthy strife is there;
Never unsheathed but to defend the right,
Or guard the honour of the cross I wear!
O fair white maid, whatever foe be nigh,
In life or death thy champion knight am I!"
Loud cry the people, "Haste! the dragon comes!

The flood divides! see his abhorrent head From the black wave emerges! See his eyes With baleful glare light on the helpless maid! His voice is thunder! Haste, brave knight, away!

He comes! the mighty dragon vast and dread! Away! away!—Alas, too late! too late!"

They meet like waves when o'er the deep, Contending winds in fury sweep!
The knight is brave, the dragon strong, The combat rages fierce and long, Until the hero's spear, alas!
Is broken on the scales of brass.
Unhorsed he fights! hope is not gone!
A meteor flash of Ascalon!
The dragon falls with hideous cries,
Lashes the earth in vain, and dies.
Loud burst the shouts of wild delight
That hail with joy the victor knight!

The light of heaven is on his noble brow,
He seeks not earthly honour, earthly fame,
He mounts his steed: "Farewell, O gentle
maid;

Ye people of Sylenë, fare you well; For I must bear the cross in other lands, And strive and suffer, till the morn shall dawn, That brings for me the martyr's fadeless crown!" Where the strong the weak oppress,
Where the suffering succour crave,
Where the tyrant spreads distress,
There the cross of George must wave!

EPILOGUE.

It comes from the misty ages,
The banner of England's might,
The blood-red cross of the brave St. George,
That burns on a field of white!
It speaks of the deathless heroes,
On fame's bright page inscrolled,
And bids great England ne'er forget
The glorious deeds of old!

O'er many a cloud of battle,

The banner has floated wide,

It shone like a star o'er the valiant hearts,

That dashed the Armada's pride!

For ever amid the thunders,

The sailor could do or die,

While tongues of flame leaped forth below,

And the flag of St. George was high!

O ne'er may the flag beloved,
Unfurl in a strife unblest,
But ever give strength to the righteous arm,
And hope to the hearts oppressed!
It says through the passing ages,
"Be brave if your cause be right!
Like the soldier-saint whose cross of red,
Still burns on your banner white!"

Great race, whose empire of splendour,
Has dazzled a wondering world!
May the flag that floats o'er thy wide domains
Be long to all winds unfurled!
Three crosses in concord blended,
The banner of Britain's might!
But the central gem of the ensign fair,
Is the cross of the dauntless knight!
Shapcott Wensley.

THE BANNER OF SAINT GEORGE.



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* The part of Sabra may be sung by a Soloist, if preferred. See also pages 13, 22 and 26.

8256.























































* If a Soloist is employed, the Contraltos must not sing the following 6 bars.

8256.











































EPILOGUE.











8256.





















M 1533 E38 op.33 1897 Elgar, (Sir) Edward William

The banner of St. George.
Piano-vocal score. English

The banner of Saint
George

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